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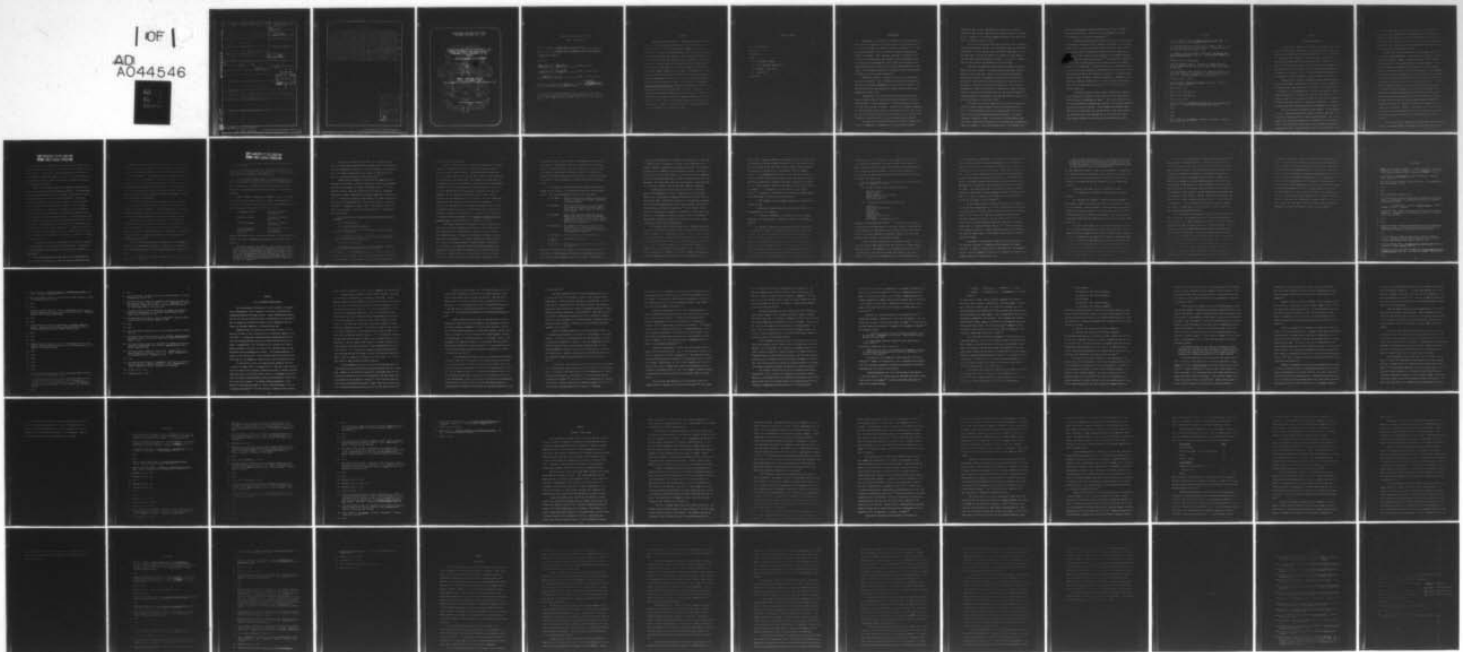
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TRAINING THE FIRST AMERICAN DIVISION FOR COMBAT IN FRANCE, 1917--ETC(U)  
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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

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BEFORE COMPLETING FORM

1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO.	3. DOCUMENT CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle)		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED
Training The First American Division For Combat In France, 1917-1918.		Final Report, 10 June 1977
6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER		
7. AUTHOR(s)	8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)	
Stone, Edwin S. III, MAJ, USA		
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
Student at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027		
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS		12. REPORT DATE
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATSW-SE Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027		10 June 1977
13. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		14. NUMBER OF PAGES
Edwin S. Stone, III		60
15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report)		15a. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
Unclassified		
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report)		
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
Master of Military Art and Science (MMAS) Thesis prepared at CGSC in partial fulfillment of the Masters Program requirements, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)		
See Reverse.		

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## ABSTRACT

*This study examines*

The purpose of this study is to examine the program for training of America's first division in Europe in 1917, from the date of its activation until it was certified ready for combat as a division in January, 1918. Thus, the training program of the 1st Division is explored chronologically through three phases: basic individual training as conducted by the division; the centralization and promulgation of training doctrine and training policies by Headquarters, American Expeditionary Forces; and the final phase of the training program during which the division was judged prepared to enter combat. The primary sources used for this study were drawn from a compilation of letters, training programs, and memoranda of the A.E.F., 1st Division, and French Army, gathered into several volumes by the War College and entitled World War Records, First Division, A.E.F. Memoirs and biographies of some of the principals involved in this effort were also used. *The author concludes* Conclusions of the thesis are that American training doctrine and principles for the 1st Division was evolutionary in nature and emerged as members of the A.E.F. gained experience. The 1st Division was trained in a very systematic manner from the simplest to the most difficult of tasks, and was successfully prepared for its entry into combat.

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TRAINING THE FIRST AMERICAN DIVISION  
FOR COMBAT IN FRANCE, 1917 - 1918

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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B.A., The Citadel, 1964

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1977

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the individual student author and do not necessarily represent the views of either the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency.

#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the program for training of America's first division in Europe in 1917, from the date of its activation until it was certified ready for combat as a division in January, 1918. Thus, the training program of the 1st Division is explored chronologically through three phases: basic individual training as conducted by the division; the centralization and promulgation of training doctrine and training policies by Headquarters, American Expeditionary Forces; and the final phase of the training program during which the division was judged prepared to enter combat. The primary sources used for this study were drawn from a compilation of letters, training programs, and memoranda of the A.E.F., 1st Division, and French Army, gathered into several volumes by the War College and entitled World War Records, First Division, A.E.F. Memoirs and biographies of some of the principals involved in this effort were also used. Conclusions of the thesis are that American training doctrine and principles for the 1st Division was evolutionary in nature and emerged as members of the A.E.F. gained experience. The 1st Division was trained in a very systematic manner from the simplest to the most difficult of tasks, and was successfully prepared for its entry into combat.

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine the training of America's first division in Europe in 1917, from the date of its activation until it was certified ready for combat as a division in January, 1918. Thus, the training program of the 1st Division is explored chronologically through three phases: basic individual training as conducted by the Division; the centralization and promulgation of training doctrine and training policies by Headquarters, A.E.F.; and the final phase of the training program during which the division was judged prepared to enter combat. This training program was evolutionary in nature and developed as members of the A.E.F. gained experience.

America had remained, "through a false notion of neutrality," out of war in Europe.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the American attitude had contributed to a position of military unpreparedness for entry into the conflict. The 1st Division had not been organized or trained when the United States declared war in April 1917.

Organization of the 1st Division was initiated at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, on May 23, 1917, from resources available to the Commanding General, Southern Department.<sup>2</sup> The units within the new division came from a variety of sources. Several of the regiments designated for foreign service were in service on the Mexican border.<sup>3</sup> Most of the men had recently been drafted into military service. This was the first instance of an American unit of this size being fielded in Europe.<sup>4</sup>

The members of the 1st Division had little time to prepare themselves for embarkation. Organization of the division was ordered



completed by June 1, 1917; they had been in service as a division a little more than one week from the date of orders initiating its organization.<sup>5</sup> Elements of the division embarked at Hoboken, New Jersey, and sailed for France on June 12, 1917.<sup>6</sup>

The 1st Division was the first unit in General John J. Pershing's "theoretical Army which had yet to be constituted, equipped, trained and sent abroad."<sup>7</sup> The 1st Division was to be first in many ways, for its experience was to provide the lessons for training the other American divisions that would be introduced into France. It arrived in France on June 23; only one month had elapsed since its activation.

When the first American division arrived in France, the French Army was boiling in turmoil. The French military had almost ceased to exist as a functioning unit, because it was laced with spontaneous, unpredictable mutinies following the disastrous Nivelle Offensive of April 1917.<sup>8</sup> The first French battalion mutinied on April 29, 1917.<sup>9</sup> From that point mutinies occurred on a frequent basis until measures implemented to regain control restored a semblance of order by mid-July; however, it was not until September that the last mutiny had passed.<sup>10</sup> During the height of the mutinies, the French War Ministry could rely on only two divisions out of a total of 109.<sup>11</sup>

The result was that the French were in a defensive posture and could not conduct a major offensive "until the Americans arrived in force."<sup>12</sup> The first American division represented that force to the French, and the French desperately awaited assistance. M. Georges Clemenceau, though not Premier at the time but wielding immense political power, visited the 1st Division at its training area in Gondrecourt, France on September 2, 1917, after having failed to find General John J.

Pershing at Headquarters, American Expeditionary Forces in Chaumont. Major General William L. Sibert, the division commander, received M. Clemenceau at the division's headquarters.<sup>13</sup>

The French leader argued forcefully that the 1st Division should be immediately introduced into the trenches on September 12, but General Sibert was not in a position to make such a decision as this by himself. M. Clemenceau "made an impassioned statement in English regarding the seriousness of the situation and the necessity of the immediate appearances of American troops in the trenches."<sup>14</sup> He considered it absolutely essential that the Americans enter the trenches to boost the sagging morale of the French Army.<sup>15</sup> General Sibert tried to explain that while the 1st Division was considered a Regular Army unit it was in fact filled with recruits and had to have sufficient training.<sup>16</sup> The division was simply not ready for combat. Shortly thereafter, M. Clemenceau left the interview, obviously dissatisfied. The French army was slowly coming to pieces, and the Americans insisted that the 1st Division had to be trained completely.

"In Pershing's eyes, the First Division always had a symbolic role," which was to represent to the world the very best that America had to offer as an emerging world power.<sup>17</sup> But to the French the 1st Division represented an untapped human resource pool from which depleted French units could be restored. It was between these opposing ideals that the 1st Division had to be trained and led. This thesis describes the training process as it unfolded for the 1st Division in France, which became the model to be followed by other American divisions.

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## CHAPTER 1

### PRELIMINARY TRAINING

Training of U.S. Forces in World War I was conducted under three separate Allied Command Structures. The first two of these structures provided for a direct line of "training supervision" of U.S. Forces from both the French and the British.<sup>1</sup> American training remained distinctively American even though tactical and technical information was drawn from both countries in the process of developing training programs. The training effort did not succumb to international political pressure nor to exigency of the times. The 1st Division was trained carefully and was committed to battle only after it had been completely trained.

General John J. Pershing, Commander-in-Chief, American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), desired that the 1st Division set the example for all American units that followed it into France. In the symbolic role of representing to the European Allies the first from America, General Pershing wanted the 1st Division to be the best unit fielded.<sup>2</sup> He would not commit the 1st Division to combat as a unit until it possessed two highly developed qualities: training and leadership. He wanted it to have a high state of training before being committed to the trenches.

The 1st Division was trained in three phases: (1) Preliminary, (2) A.E.F. Training Centralization, and (3) Training, Final Phase. The Preliminary Phase was devoted to basic military training. The second phase, A.E.F. Training Centralization, occurred when the 1st Division was no longer permitted to train under its own program developed by Headquarters, A.E.F. The final phase began after the battalions of the



1st Division completed a ten day tour of training in the trenches. It was also the period during which the commanders and their staffs, the regiments, the brigades, and the division were exercised in their positions under combat conditions for the first time. Each phase emphasized training in a very systematic and methodical manner before the division was committed to battle for the first time.

Aboard ships during the movement to France, members of the 1st Division developed organization, instruction, and training, but training guidance was minimal. Company commanders were instructed to organize their companies into either three platoons (infantry company) or four platoons (machine gun company) with the purpose of training platoon leaders, consolidating units, and facilitating control. Unit commanders were instructed to work through platoon leaders in handling their organization, while platoons were similarly to develop their squad leaders. Instructions for daily routines for the men were limited to: 1. thirty minutes of physical exercise in both the morning and afternoon; and, 2. lectures on "various phases of training for trench warfare with which officers aboard may have gained some theoretical familiarity."<sup>3</sup> No definite plans were announced for schools for officers and noncommissioned officers, since the necessary manuals were not available. Guidance was limited to training the division for offensive action and organizing the division. Finally, "every member" of the division was to be instructed "in the responsibilities of his position as a representative of the first unit of the Army of the United States to serve in Europe."<sup>4</sup>

This first effort at training the division thus lacked definitive purpose. This quality may be attributed to a new organization composed

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of inexperienced members embarking on the first venture of this nature without the proper text books, or, at least if the texts existed, without centralizing the instruction.<sup>5</sup> America had entered the war without a modern army by contemporary standards, and the 1st Division was to be the first American Army to face the difficulties inherent in creating and training a modern army.

When the 1st Division landed at St. Nazaire, France on June 26, 1917, a more energetic training program was pursued.<sup>6</sup> A training memorandum was published that day with the subjects being chosen to instill military discipline and to develop military bearing.<sup>7</sup> This basic approach was probably chosen for several reasons. First, the perceptions prevailing at that time emphasized that the basis of combat is discipline and that in comparison to the American's allies, American officers and men were undisciplined. A second belief was that a high state of physical conditioning was necessary.<sup>8</sup> The subjects first chosen to accomplish this end were: marching, signalling, and drills.<sup>9</sup> Close order drills and ceremonies were to be utilized "to a limited extent to perfect the disciplinary training necessary."<sup>10</sup> Physical drill was held once each day. Practice road marches were to commence with a full pack march of eight miles "and working up as rapidly as possible to a minimum of fifteen miles."<sup>11</sup>

Two days later, the first memorandum was followed by a second.<sup>12</sup> It did not change the initial guidance and simply said: "Sighting and Position and Aiming Drills were to be given with special attention to rapid fire."<sup>13</sup>

The second memorandum was rescinded by a third memorandum on July 18, 1917. Essentially, the theme for training remained the same.

For example, "The period from this date until August 4th will be devoted mainly to disciplinary training." Also, "Particular attention will be paid to the following: Physical drill to develop military bearing and precision of movement."<sup>14</sup> The emphasis on military bearing increased. A battalion of the 16th Infantry, 1st Division, took part in July 4th ceremonies in the Court of Honor at Les Invalides sponsored by the French commemorating our Independence. General John J. Pershing, Commander-in-Chief, American Expeditionary Forces, was present at the ceremonies and complained that the soldiers appeared "untrained and awkward" in their military appearance and bearing.<sup>15</sup>

While the division's training program was designed to remedy this shortcoming, it had not yet come to grips with the problem of training its soldiers for warfare. The Americans were still most concerned with appearance and with discipline. They believed the 1st Division was not developed sufficiently for actual training for combat.

Meanwhile, plans were developed for the 1st Division to be assisted by a French Division in a training area in the vicinity of Gondrecourt, France.<sup>16</sup> The French 47th Division was designated to act as "sort of a guide" for the 1st Division.<sup>17</sup> This phrase is interpreted to mean that the 1st Division was to receive its training under the "tutelage" of this ally.<sup>18</sup>

The 47th Division was ordered to Gondrecourt by the Commander-in-Chief of the French Army "to serve as a model for the instruction of the First American Division."<sup>19</sup> The mission assigned the 47th Division was:

a) - To demonstrate our [French] methods of combat to the entire First American Division.



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b) - To facilitate the establishment of the divisional schools of the 1st Division.

c) - To assist the formation of the nuclei of the divisional schools of the 2d Division with a few selected officers and N.C.O.'s, taken from the 1st Division or from members of the 2d Division arriving in camp before the main body of the 2d Division.

d) - To prepare a certain number of officers and N.C.O.'s to receive instruction in the French Army Corps and Army schools who will (would) later become instructors in the schools of the American Army. <sup>20</sup>

Thus, the French and the American Divisions each understood that the French were to demonstrate their methods of warfare to the on-looking Americans.

General d'Arman de Pouydraguin, Commanding General, 47th Infantry Division, advised General William L. Sibert, Commanding General, 1st Division, of French divisional organization and recommended that his units be assigned to train the 1st Division as follows:

1st American Brigade:	4th Group of Chasseurs Staff-Boviolles
2d American Brigade:	5th Group of Chasseurs Staff-Reffroy
5th Marine Regiment:	6th Group of Chasseurs Staff-Boviolles
Divisional Depot and Center of American Instruction	Divisional Depot of the 47th Division <sup>21</sup> Staff-Mauvages

General Sibert agreed to the proposal and informed the French general by letter of the lack of experience and training of the members of his division.

Over fifty percent of the soldiers in the division are recruits almost entirely without training. Practically all of the officers below the grade of Captain have been appointed less than six months. Some of these new officers have had service in the ranks. Few of the present noncommissioned officers have had longer service than two years. The members of the Division and Brigade Staffs, and the regiments of the Division were assembled for the first time upon landing at St. Nazaire. <sup>22</sup>



These conditions had resulted from: (a) an increase in the number of Regular Army regiments by about eighty percent, (b) appointing the best noncommissioned officers to second lieutenant, (c) doubling the size of the company organization from 100 men, (d) modeling the 1st Division organization after the French organization.<sup>23</sup>

General Sibert informed the French division commander that he considered it "essential" that their training be limited "to elementary work and the development of a proper disciplinary spirit."<sup>24</sup> At the same time, General Sibert provided insight as to what he considered "essential" through a "Memorandum for Brigade Commanders," dated July 18, 1917.<sup>25</sup> Training for a period of approximately four weeks following the publishing of the memorandum was to "be devoted mainly to disciplinary training."<sup>26</sup> Subsequently, General Sibert listed several subjects for which it was essential to pay "particular attention."<sup>27</sup> The subjects he selected follow:

- (a) Physical drill to develop military bearing and precision of movement.
- (b) Close order drill.
- (c) Bayonet exercise and combat.
- (d) Sighting and position and aiming drill, with particular attention to rapid fire.
- (e) Daily marches with full pack of not to exceed two hours duration, and one practice march with full pack for maximum distance for which troops are qualified.
- (f) First aid instruction.
- (g) Signalling for such men, about fifty percent of command, as have demonstrated some aptitude for this work.<sup>28</sup>

These subjects were chosen because over half of the men of the 1st Division were untrained recruits. Their level of proficiency in basic military subjects had to be established before training was progressed to

more complicated unit maneuvers.

There is little doubt that the Americans charged with the responsibility of training the 1st Division perceived a compelling need to start with basic military subjects. Training memoranda document that the subject areas selected for training the 1st Division were fundamental military subjects, and reflect that little emphasis was being placed on the complex aspects of trench warfare. Again, as with the correspondence from within the division and from the 47th French Division, on July 18, 1917, more emphasis was soon being placed on training; this time the Commander-in-Chief, American Expeditionary Forces, General John J. Pershing, sent two memoranda to the 1st Division. The first memorandum (Memorandum A) was the American training project memorandum. It is not available for examination as this document was separated from the basic correspondence when the editors of the World War Records assembled the documents of Volume XX for reproduction. An editor's note states that, "It appears that this memorandum is the Program of Training for the 1st Division A.E.F., published under date of October 12, 1917."<sup>29</sup>

The second, Memorandum B, Memorandum on French Training Project, states that the French presupposed that American soldiers had had sufficient training prior to their arrival in France, as the 1st Division was a Regular Army unit. There was some doubt as to whether its application was to be expedient; so, General Pershing left "the adoption of any feature of this French project" to General Sibert's discretion.<sup>30</sup> It was apparent to the Americans that French General Headquarters had arranged for training based on a tentative plan. Basically the plan provided for a French division to lend assistance to the 1st Division billeted in a French training area. Each French company organization

was expected to have either an officer or noncommissioned officer that spoke English. Additionally, the French proposed that the following courses of action be pursued: (a) unit training up to division level, (b) training of instructors for division schools, (c) training for instructors of higher than division level schools, and (d) the training of a very small group of Americans in French Army schools as instructors.<sup>31</sup>

In the same vein, the French proposed a sixteen week training program for the division. The program was broken into eight two-week periods. The following program was advocated (by the French):

- 1st two weeks - Officers and men train together and specialists selected, training in field work, organization of division schools.
- 2d two weeks - Training of specialists, close order instruction, (one-half officers and men to serve in front line with French troops for a period of 8 to 12 days.)
- 3d two weeks - Exercises by companies, battalions and regiments; other half of officers and noncommissioned officers serve in front lines. Officers selected to be instructors in division schools sent to French Army schools.
- 4th two weeks - Two regiments to take a tour of duty in the French front line. These regiments to be scattered among French regiments and battalions but companies held together.
- 5th two weeks - Other regiments to go into front line.
- 6th and 7th two weeks - Instruction by division.
- 8th two weeks - American division ready to take over a section as a whole.<sup>32</sup>

Although their plan did not envision the division moving into a sector for fourteen to sixteen weeks, the French were undoubtedly expecting a unit that was almost prepared to enter the trenches. Their course of

instruction as proposed above is designed for orientation of a unit that is already trained in the basics of combat, but the Americans did not consider themselves prepared for more advanced training. The French program may also be a symptom of the overwhelming feelings on the French national level that it was necessary to get relief from their staggering losses of the preceding years by an infusion of American units into their own ranks. The French plan called for an acceleration of American entry into the actual fighting. But the Americans remained intransigent.

No American unit could be sent into the front line without approval from Headquarters, A.E.F.<sup>33</sup> Approval would come only when General John J. Pershing, the Commander-in-Chief, was certain that the division was ready. Training was considered "so fundamentally important" that the Division Commander was to give "close personal supervision" to "the efficiency of officers in this work."<sup>34</sup> Those officers who were found to be inattentive and lacking in "interest, or energy toward inefficiency of his command or retard its progress" were to be relieved.<sup>35</sup> Thus, General Pershing was preparing the condition for relief of those officers who did not meet his expectations.

At the same time, the 47th French Division Commander was providing the 1st Division with a proposed detailed organization of American infantry companies reflecting French structure. The 1st Division established its own platoon organization for attack formations, but accepted the proposed French organization for training with the 47th French Division.<sup>36</sup> The 1st Division's adoption of its own attack formation, however, was not accepted by General Pershing, who directed that the division instructions of August 5 be revoked. General Pershing wanted the attack formations to be tailored to fit the situation as in the



French style. Standard formations were acceptable only in the event that the leaders were "without adequate training or as a class "were" so deficient in initiative that they "were" unable to make a proper estimate of the particular situation and fit the deployment of their commands thereto."<sup>37</sup> The Commander-in-Chief, A.E.F. felt that this doctrine conformed "to American traditions and capabilities," and directed "that the principles and methods of deployment and attack" published in a translation of selected passages from the French "Manual of the Chief of Section of Infantry" .... "be applied in the instruction of" 1st Division troops.<sup>38</sup> An analysis of this directive provides the following glimpses of the development of American training principles:

1. Task organize units and combat formations to accomplish the mission at hand.
2. Make use of foreign training literature and doctrine if it is appropriate to the situation.
3. Centralize development of training doctrine and program planning at the highest level - decentralize execution of training programs.<sup>39</sup>

The program of instruction as proposed by the 47th French Division Commander followed much the same general outline as that of Memorandum B. The primary difference was that there was no program for sending American soldiers to front line French units for a tour of training. Also added to the proposal for the first period was "individual instruction (in American units)."<sup>40</sup> These two points further reinforce the impression that the 1st Division training effort would remain distinctively American and that American units would be sent to the front when they were considered by Americans to be trained for the task.

Although much of the 47th French Division's program of instruction was soon accepted and implemented, the Americans were far more anxious to ensure they were thoroughly trained than the French, who wanted Americans in the trenches as soon as possible. Soon, following completion of training under the memoranda of July 18, 1917, General Sibert instructed the Brigade and Regiment that:

For the period August 6th to 25th inclusive, the instruction and training of infantry will include:

(a) General Training, giving special attention to:

Physical training  
Bayonet combat  
Target practice, up to 300 yards  
Marches with full pack  
Close order drill

(b) In conjunction with attached French units:

Specialists:  
Grenadiers, hand and rifle  
Auto-rifles  
37mm guns  
Extended order  
Communication and liaison  
Field works  
The company in supporting points<sup>41</sup>

Training in the mornings was conducted with the French, while training as prescribed by the memorandum of 18 July was conducted by the Americans in the afternoon.<sup>42</sup> Americans had been in France for more than a month and the training was gradually becoming more complex, but still scant attention was being paid to unit combat training.

General Pershing inspected the 1st Division on August 7, the day after the division began training with the 47th Division and was unhappy with what he saw. The Commander-in-Chief apparently perceived "a lack of supervision by the Division and other high commanders and their staffs."<sup>43</sup> In general, the Commander-in-Chief was disturbed by a lack

of military appearance and bearing of the soldiers.<sup>44</sup> At the time of the inspection, the division's training program addressed the subjects to remedy the perception that the Americans lacked discipline. Training continued in this vein for a period of time. Even though directions for school of the soldier, specialists, and officers were being implemented, the whole period seems to lack specific direction. The Americans were unable to distinguish between those elements of soldiering that give the appearances of "looking good" and those that provide a solid foundation for combat. This impression seems to be further reinforced by General Pershing's comments that "there was vagueness and lack of definite information on the part of officers of all grades as to the exact state of instruction and supply of their commands."<sup>45</sup>

The 47th French Division continued to assist in the training of the 1st Division through August 25, 1917.<sup>46</sup> Following this period, the 1st Division was to be toured through French front line units in detachments.<sup>47</sup> This tour did not take place, apparently because General Pershing disapproved the plans of the 47th French Division. The 1st Division was to continue general training and "training with attached French units as outlined by French officials."<sup>48</sup> General Pershing at this time was not anxious to commit untrained troops into the trenches, and would not commit troops to the trenches for the specific purpose of acquiring training.

A new phase in training was to begin in the form of battalion and regimental exercises - a departure from individual and company training. In reply to a letter from the 18th French Division Commander who was offering a program of instruction "of problems for Battalion and Regiment exercises," General Sibert said:



After having studied the details of the specialists with the 47th Infantry Division, the time has arrived, as it seems to me, to put the American officers in contact with modern warfare problems, that they will be required to solve themselves, giving orders and executing them without the help of French officers.<sup>49</sup>

He wanted American officers to learn to solve problems. In asking that the French present the problems and critique the results, General Sibert was adamant in his view that perfection in problem solving was not as important as the American officers learning to solve problems themselves.<sup>50</sup>

During the first week, the 1st Division was to conduct:

(a) A minimum of two problems for each battalion in trench warfare.

(b) Exercises for companies in tactics of mobile warfare.<sup>51</sup>

The remarks recorded at the divisional level for this period of instruction are imprecise. They are general in nature and appear as a division compilation of lessons learned for all of the battalions. This period of training (June, July, August, and September, 1917) involved a French and American effort from the individual soldier level to the unit (regiment) level.

But General Pershing was still not satisfied with the 1st Division's training program from the divisional-level view point. His Inspector General, Brigadier General Andre W. Brewster, made an inspection trip on September 17 and reported that "Division training was much too Gallicized with not enough practical application and tactical decision making."<sup>52</sup> General Pershing at this point decided that the 1st Division's training program had to be developed by Headquarters, A.E.F. At the same time, he was under tremendous political pressure from the French to commit American soldiers to the trenches.



The 1st Division faced terribly complex problems during the preliminary phase of training in France. Over half of the division consisted of untrained recruits that had to be trained from the very start. Next, it had to develop its own training program without anyone having any previous experience in the matter of training a division for a European war. Then, it was trapped between conflicting needs: the French on one extreme wanting replacement personnel even if they were untrained and the Americans on the other extreme not desiring to commit American soldiers until they were perfectly trained. Also, another difficulty added to their troubles: General Pershing was dissatisfied with the leadership of the division. Further, there was a basic warfare doctrine conflict between the Americans and the French: the American point of view advocating war of movement representing the seeking of aggressive contact in combat and the French doctrine calling for trench warfare representing a defensive attitude.

The first phase of training was a period of great difficulty for the 1st Division. The problems that the 1st Division encountered came from all directions. General Pershing remarked that the soldiers appeared undisciplined, thus causing the division to focus on appearance. He also forced the division to adopt French attack formation organization for trench warfare training; yet, at the same time, his Inspector General admonished the division for being too much like the French. Meanwhile, the conflict in basic tactical doctrine between the Americans and the French continued, and the 1st Division was caught between the opposing ideals. Divisional leadership faltered from a lack of experience. Forceful leadership was needed to shepherd the division between the opposing American and French doctrine, but General Sibert did not have

the experience necessary to train a division filled with recruits for combat. In General Sibert's defense, it must be said that Headquarters, A.E.F. was remiss in this whole matter of training by not formulating a plan for the division and publishing it in the form of a training directive from the beginning. The problems encountered by the 1st Division would have been avoided had Headquarters, A.E.F. made known its concepts from the very beginning. The first phase of training appears as a time in which neither Headquarters, A.E.F. nor the 1st Division seemed to know what was needed in the way of training Americans for combat. The only difference in level of proficiency between two headquarters by the end of the period was that Headquarters, A.E.F. finally discerned what was needed and, thus, formulated training doctrine for the 1st Division. Hence, the first phase of three of General Pershing's training programs for the divisions trained in France finally emerged.<sup>53</sup>

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## CHAPTER 2

### A.E.F. TRAINING CENTRALIZATION

The second phase of training for the 1st Division is characterized by Headquarters, A.E.F. taking the initiative in developing and promulgating American training doctrine. General Pershing had observed that the 1st Division had neither what he considered to be a progressive plan to prepare the division for combat, nor the leadership that possessed the necessary experience to accomplish that end.

Beginning with its introduction into France on June 23, 1917, and until October 8, 1917, training the 1st Division was largely a division effort. A centralized training program promulgating American doctrine for training American divisions in France had not been put into effect. Headquarters, A.E.F. provided the 1st Division with training general guidance on 18 July, but, there is no indication that any comprehensive training program was directed.<sup>1</sup> 1st Division memoranda subsequent to the 18 July A.E.F. letter indicate that the 1st Division was developing its own program in conjunction with the 47th French Division.

At the coalition level, the organizational structure was still in Phase I (4 August 1914 to 6 November 1917).<sup>2</sup> This was a period during which there was little cooperation between the allies.<sup>3</sup> General Pershing's impression that the allied governments were not "in harmony" was derived from "the evident rivalry between the British and French for control and use of our (U.S.) forces."<sup>4</sup> As General Pershing explained, it was American policy from the outset "to build a distinctive army of our own as rapidly as possible."<sup>5</sup> "In each division a system of troop training

under the direct supervision of the Division Commander" was implemented.<sup>6</sup>

General George C. Marshall provided several insights concerning the 1st Division's perceptions of training to this point. General Marshall began the war as a member of the operations section, and during his tour with the 1st Division attained the rank of lieutenant colonel and headed the operations section.<sup>7</sup> The division believed that it had labored under unnecessary impediments. Part of the difficulty arose from the fact that while "American General Headquarters did not approve of the French methods of instruction, there were no orders to discontinue." At the same time, there were "very drastic orders to conduct training along American lines."<sup>8</sup> The French had tried to push training "to a rapid completion," so that American troops could be committed to battle "at the earliest possible moment...."<sup>9</sup> In the opposite direction, the Americans were not going to commit a unit to battle without feeling confident of success, because they believed "a reverse" suffered by the first American unit would precipitate "a most depressing effect on all of our Allies...."<sup>10</sup> Another point causing some distress during the early training was that the number of daily visitations and inspections made it "next to impossible to attend to the daily work...."<sup>11</sup> All of this served to make training extremely difficult.

Some accommodation by the 1st Division had been made with the 47th French Division, and training had progressed under the 47th's tutelage. Members of the division considered it unfortunate that the 47th Division was ordered to the front and replaced by the 18th French Division during the second phase of training.<sup>12</sup> The 1st Division and the 47th French Division had established a rapport that did not carry over into a harmonious working relationship with the 18th French Division.<sup>13</sup>

Difficulties arose between the 18th French Division and the 1st Division over the method of instruction, the French wanting to demonstrate trench warfare while the Americans watched. Training policy makers of the 1st Division considered that this method "did not do... much good," ....as the demonstrations were "cut-and-dried affairs and it was very hard for our [American] men to take in the important points."<sup>14</sup> The relationship between the two divisions was strained at best.

General Sibert wanted the French to observe the 1st Division training for combat and to provide impartial and impersonal solutions, but General Bordeaux, Commander of the 18th French Division, insisted on the French demonstrating while the Americans watched. General Sibert finally took matters into his own hands and convinced General Bordeaux of the advantages of the American method. He concluded, "Under the new arrangement our (American) progress in training was very satisfactory and much more rapid than in previous periods, but the division was still a long way from being sufficiently trained and disciplined to justify its entry into the line."<sup>15</sup>

In the meantime, much French political pressure had been brought to bear to commit the 1st Division to the trenches as soon as possible. This pressure may have succeeded in accelerating by several months the American's plans for commitment of troops to the trenches ahead of schedule, but the immediate desires of the French that Americans begin sharing the French burden were not realized.<sup>16</sup> The outcome of this period is that Headquarters, A.E.F. took the lead in developing and promulgating training policy for the 1st Division, since they were interested in "establishing a precedent with the French for training of American troops



in French sectors."<sup>17</sup>

The French approached General Pershing requesting that the 1st Division take front line training in a quiet sector to boost sagging French morale. General Pershing subsequently observed the 1st Division conducting its training with the 18th French Division. The training during this period called for at least two regimental problems in trench warfare and battalion maneuvers in open warfare.<sup>18</sup> After the inspection trip, General Pershing was satisfied with the 1st Division's program, (October 4, 1917) and agreed to the French request to introduce American soldiers into the trenches. Battalions of the 1st Division prepared themselves for the move.<sup>19</sup>

General Pershing commented upon returning from the inspection, "I returned much pleased with the evidences of efficiency in this organization." In view of the dissatisfaction he had expressed as a result of his previous inspection on August 7, 1917, his remark must be interpreted to mean that the 1st Division had progressed under its own training program to the point the units were committed to the trenches for training only. However, Pershing did not believe that the division was completely prepared to assume responsibility for a sector as a unit.<sup>20</sup>

On October 8, 1917 training doctrine for the 1st Division entered the second phase and became centralized at A.E.F. level.<sup>21</sup> The Training Staff of the A.E.F. (the General Staff G-5) was responsible for "General training and enunciation of the doctrine of instruction and training throughout the command."<sup>22</sup> The Chief of the Training Section, Lieutenant Colonel Paul B. Malone, furnished the Commanding General of the 1st Division definite training guidance on the subject of "Training

the Division."<sup>23</sup> This approach to training the 1st Division should have been employed from the beginning of the introduction of American troops into France. It can only be surmised that this approach to training was not followed by the A.E.F. from the beginning because it was assumed that the division commander knew what to do.

During the second period of the A.E.F. training program, the division had sufficient time allotted to allow for a "tour of ten days at the front for each battalion of Infantry and Field Artillery."<sup>24</sup> The final arrangements for this tour were made in a conference on October 4, 1917, at Headquarters, Eastern Group (French). The Commander-in-Chief, A.E.F., (General Pershing) and the Commanding General, Eastern Group, (General deCastelnau) in conjunction with their staffs, stipulated that the necessary instructions would be sent through the French chain of command to the 18th Division (French) Commanding General "to make all the necessary arrangements."<sup>25</sup>

General Pershing wanted to insure that each unit was trained in advance for their specific tasks. The 1st Division was to train all its units "in advance for the duty contemplated."<sup>26</sup> This particular aspect of second training phase was designated for preparing the units to enter the trenches. Additionally, the 1st Division commander was directed to have the units down to company level conduct reconnaissances prior to occupation of assigned sectors.<sup>27</sup> This is an example of General Pershing insuring that each unit was trained for the specific task to be accomplished.

The units that were employed in the front were to serve "as integral parts of regiments of the 18th French Division."<sup>28</sup> The largest

unit that would occupy a sector independently was a battalion. The American commander would lead his battalion within the scope of the policies dictated to him by a French regimental commander.<sup>29</sup> The purpose of a tour at the front with a French unit was to ensure that Americans became familiar "with all the phases of trench duty performed in rotation by French troops."<sup>30</sup>

This particular period in the training of the 1st Division provides another example of the "training supervision" chain of command existing at that time: the battalion commanders of the 1st Division took their orders from French commanders while in the trenches. Further, the 1st Division was trained in the French method of trench warfare. Two points could be accomplished only with General Pershing's express permission: committing Americans to the trenches under French command and training in French trench warfare methods.

In the Program of Training for the 1st Division, A.E.F., developed by the Training Section, General Staff, the themes were distinctly American: war of movement, rigid discipline, learning the basics followed by practical exercises, applying resources to situation method of problem solving, and sound leadership training. For the first time, the centralization of training doctrine and enunciation emerge in directive form - and then only after the battalions had been trained to the degree that General Pershing considered them prepared to enter the trenches.<sup>31</sup>

The scheme of instruction for the 1st Division as developed by Headquarters, A.E.F., provided for "progressive instruction from the smallest to the largest units" with maneuvers in which units were pitted against each other as "a reliable method for testing the proficiency of subordinate commanders and subordinate units." The first period

(October 7-20) of the A.E.F. program was to be devoted to preparing the battalions to enter the trenches.<sup>32</sup> The A.E.F. program specified the number of hours that each type of unit (Infantry company, machine gun company, headquarters company, battalion and regiment) was to concentrate on in training by subject area. Training for the first period was to progress from individual proficiency through unit proficiency at battalion level.<sup>33</sup>

Maneuver unit training during the first period of the A.E.F. Program was designed to prepare units to go into the trenches. The companies were to train in "Platoon and company in combat."<sup>34</sup> The battalion two-sided maneuver problems were "arranged by the regimental commander."<sup>35</sup> The problems included:

1. Occupation of sector; relief of battalion occupying sector, day and night. Arrangements for security. Patrols raids, and dispositions to repel raids.
2. Enemy attack expected, defense by first line battalion. Counter attack.<sup>36</sup>

Additionally, battalions were to train for:

Organization of a sector in preparation for a general offensive. The attack from trenches; reduction of points of resistance. Correction of deficiencies.<sup>37</sup>

This period of the program was "Chiefly devoted to battalion training."<sup>38</sup> Members of Headquarters, A.E.F., specified those subjects that they considered necessary to prepare the battalions for accepting responsibility of a sector in the trenches.

A memorandum making note of the shortcomings of the maneuvers of the first period of the second phase was published two-thirds through that portion of the program.<sup>39</sup> The points discussed were organized under the following headings:



1. Liaison:, 2. Patrolling:, 3. "Stand To":, 4. Raids:, 5. Attacks:, 6. Counterattacks:, 7. Group leaders:, 8. Trench Orders:<sup>40</sup>

Of these points, the most serious attention appeared to be placed on patrolling, raids, attacks, counterattacks, and group leaders. Patrols were conducted in a manner that would lead one to believe that their specific purposes were accomplished. Raids, attacks, and counterattacks received generally the same comments - that preparation for each required forethought, preparation, and rehearsal. Next, emphasis was placed on "Group Leaders" taking charge in the event of the unexpected and accomplishing the task at hand. The term "group leader" apparently means that whoever was present would initiate the steps to accomplish a task at hand by supervising the actions of others.<sup>41</sup>

The second period (October 21-November 24) of the centralized training program was, like the first period, devoted to battalion training. However, the second period was different in two primary respects. First, the battalions were rotated through the trenches for training under French supervision, and second, the battalions not in the trenches pursued a training program of American concept.<sup>42</sup> It is judged that this training was not needed by the 1st Division and was undertaken with French supervision merely for the sake of being able to say that the Americans cooperated with the Allied effort.

Field Orders were drawn and issued by the 1st Division arranging for introduction of the 1st battalion of each regiment into the trenches.<sup>43</sup> The following battalions, beginning on October 20, 1917, were the first American maneuver units to train in the trenches.

1. First Brigade -

1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment

1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment

2. Second Brigade -

1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment

1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment<sup>44</sup>

This method provided for each of the twelve battalions (three per regiment) to rotate through the trenches at a rate of four battalions every ten days with the whole division to be completed within thirty-five days. The battalions of the American regiments were assigned to the 18th French Division as follows:

a. 16th and 18th Infantry to 32d French Infantry

b. 26th and 28th Infantry to 66th French Infantry<sup>45</sup>

Each American battalion was to initially "occupy a second line position in rear of the regiment to which it is (was) assigned" and then move up to the front line. The French battalions alternated positions with the Americans by taking up positions to the rear of the American battalions.<sup>46</sup> Each succeeding battalion of a regiment was to occupy the same position in the trenches as the battalion before it had.<sup>47</sup>

The purpose of the trench tour was to train Americans in the French methods of trench warfare. The ten day training intervals at the front encountered few difficulties with the exception of a German raid on the morning of November 3, in the sector occupied by Company F, 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment. This raid resulted in the first American casualties of the war.<sup>48</sup> The success of the German raid is partly attributed to General Bordeaux's order that American patrols were not to extend beyond their own wire, leaving the Germans freedom of

movement in the area lying in front of the American wire.<sup>49</sup> The tragedy does not reflect unfavorably on the training of the 1st Division. This particular incident and the alleged reason for its occurrence was used as leverage to secure General Bordeaux's tacit approval for an American raid beyond the wire.<sup>50</sup>

The battalions not engaged in duty at the front pursued a rigorous training program for implementing training in General Pershing's concept of open warfare. General Pershing perceived that if a deadlock were to be broken in trench warfare, soldiers must rise up out of the trenches and begin a "war of movement."<sup>51</sup> The French were critical of this theory because in their experience the end could only be accomplished through trench warfare methods. They had lost thousands of men in the first years of the war following such tactics and were psychologically conditioned to defensive tactics. General James G. Harbord, Chief of Staff, A.E.F., was extremely critical of those who found fault with General Pershing's methods.

The perfectly proper and not untactful insistence by General Pershing on his own ideas in this difference of opinion has been criticized as a lack of diplomacy by officers of opinion upon whom no part of the responsibility lay, who took no risks, and whose experience had included no opportunity for an equal knowledge.<sup>52</sup>

For those battalions not in the trenches, the second period of the 1st Division's training devoted four times as many hours to Open Warfare as it did to French Warfare (forty-eight hours vis a vis twelve hours).<sup>53</sup> General Pershing was to have his way in other things, too. Mention was made in the Preliminary Phase that General Pershing was unhappy with General Sibert's leadership. This condition stemmed from his belief that General Sibert was inefficient. General Pershing had observed Sibert's ineptness at critiquing the battalion problems in



September, and further disagreed with General Sibert's belief that Americans needed assistance in French tactical training and staff work. General Pershing became convinced that the 1st Division needed a new commander.<sup>54</sup>

Brigadier Robert L. Bullard, Commander of the 2d Brigade was the man that General Pershing had in mind to assume command of the 1st Division when General Sibert was relieved.<sup>55</sup> Pershing privately discussed with General Bullard on October 20, 1917, his intentions to place Bullard in command of the 1st Division - the same day that the first battalions started for training under supervision of the French in the trenches.<sup>56</sup>

Bullard concluded that the Commander-in-Chief did not have the authority to relieve General Sibert of command. There were many problems associated with relieving General Sibert, and Pershing had to build a strong case as his appointment had been made by higher authority without Pershing's patronage. The A.E.F. staff laid the ground work for the relief through inspections that were extremely critical of the division's senior officers. The inspectors recommended that Sibert be replaced.<sup>57</sup> Quite simply, Pershing had lost faith in his abilities and nothing would restore it.<sup>58</sup> But, the relief of General Sibert had to wait until conditions were more favorable.<sup>59</sup>

Meanwhile, Headquarters, American Expeditionary Forces had taken the lead in setting the tenor for what Americans would do in the formulation and promulgation of tactical doctrine. G-5, A.E.F. translated tactical doctrine into training doctrine. Through the centralization of the 1st Division's training program under A.E.F., this distinctly American tactical doctrine of mobile warfare or war of movement appeared



ridiculous to the French and was a main point of contention between the French and American authorities. It caused many problems with General Bordeaux, Commander of the 18th French Division at the beginning of the unit training phase for the division. However, the American perspective was needed at that point in the war, if for nothing else than a reexamination of allied philosophy.

Phase two began on October 8, with Headquarters, A.E.F. standardizing the division's training program. General Pershing found much fault with what General Sibert did; yet, the 1st Division had progressed in its training to the point that the battalions were considered proficient enough to train in the trenches in actual combat under French command.

In all fairness, training in the trenches up to this point was a remarkable feat. The division had been organized for a total of five months and had been in France for only four months when the first battalions were introduced into the trenches. Considering the organizational problems, the differences in American and French training philosophy, the differences in American and French needs, and the tremendous stress placed on General Sibert, the 1st Division was well trained.

At the beginning of the second phase the 1st Division lost the power to control the development and promulgation of its own training doctrine. Headquarters A.E.F. decided how the divisions would train in France. The second phase ended when the last battalions came out of the trenches in late November 1917. It marked the end of direct French influence on American training in the 1st Division, though the training supervision channel in the Allied Command Structure still existed. The French had every right to be exasperated with the American authorities

in this particular undertaking because they sought French assistance and then only pretended to pay attention. Yet, it was necessary for the Americans to take training matters into their own hands as the French programs did not include the preparation of senior American commanders and staffs for the tasks of leading large units in combat.

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## CHAPTER 3

### TRAINING: FINAL PHASE

The final phase of training the 1st Division consisted of maneuver unit training. It began with regimental exercises and was planned to progress through brigade and division exercises. Tactical training composed the bulk of the instruction. Tactical maneuvers called for exercises in trench warfare (breaching fortifications, rupturing defenses, limited tactical objectives) and open warfare (deep objectives, maneuvering a combined arms force aggressively toward an ill-defined objective). Developed on American tactical doctrine, the final phase of training and maneuvers certified the division as combat qualified.

The first period of the final phase began on twenty-five November and lasted until December 15, 1917.<sup>1</sup> This three week period was primarily devoted to training on the regimental level.<sup>2</sup> Even though there had been a reorganization of the Allies on the coalition level on 7 November, the 1st Division was still in theory subordinated to the French for training. In fact, General Pershing still commanded the American units and conducted training according to his own concepts.<sup>3</sup>

During these months the Allied effort had reached its lowest point.<sup>4</sup> The British had suffered defeat at Cambrai; the Italians were defeated at Caporetto; and the Czar of Russia's regime had collapsed.<sup>5</sup> Clearly, the Allied Command was in a predicament. With Russia's collapse, German troops were released for the Western Front, and the German victory at Cambrai further weakened the British. Both France and Britain were forced to send divisions to Italy following the Italian

defeat at Caporetto.<sup>6</sup> The net result was a further weakened Allied front opposed by a German military force no longer faced with the dilemma of fighting on two fronts simultaneously.

The efforts to incorporate American forces in both French and British units continued, and this increased the pressure during the final phase of training the 1st Division. Final arrangements were worked out in late January concerning the training of American forces. To the British, these arrangements meant that American infantry battalions would be trained with the British, then regiments formed under American command, and finally American divisions would be formed. General Pershing also agreed to allow American regiments to train in quiet sectors under French divisions for one month.<sup>7</sup> Neither of these plans affected the 1st Division since it was in its final phase of training.

General Pershing was primarily concerned that amalgamation of American units would not allow for the building of an American Army nor would it provide for the training of the officers and staffs required to lead large units.<sup>8</sup> Also, he persisted in the view that American training "was based on the determination to force the Germans out of their trenches and beat them in the open."<sup>9</sup> Even though the 1st Division was theoretically under French training supervision, the 1st Division pursued an American training plan based on American doctrinal concepts. The French had little impact in terms of how this unit was trained or what concepts it was trained in.

The A.E.F. program covered three major areas of training: Open Warfare, French (trench) Warfare, and Demonstrations.<sup>10</sup> Training emphasis was once more placed on Open Warfare. Open Warfare training was allocated a total of thirty-six hours of seventy-seven allowed for



regimental training. Open Warfare training had two phases. The first phase consisted of instruction on attack, defense, and advance and rear guard. The second phase was allocated for practical exercises in the form of two sided maneuvers pitting regiment against regiment. Brigade commanders were responsible for preparing the maneuver problems.<sup>11</sup>

French trench warfare instruction decreased in importance. An eight hour problem was developed for a regimental attack from the trenches on three successive objectives. The twelve hours of trench warfare instruction were rounded out with a four hour block on occupying and defending a sector.<sup>12</sup> The third major area, Demonstration, was devoted to showing the soldiers of the 1st Division how certain weapons were employed. The areas demonstrated were: artillery employment, artillery barrages, machine gun barrages, liaison, supporting artillery and firing over troops and offensive and defensive gas employment.<sup>13</sup>

The 2d Brigade integrated the demonstrations into the daily training schedule. An example of a day's training might include occupying trenches by 0830 hours for regimental training in the defense of a sector. After a three hour training block, the Brigade would break for lunch, and reassemble at designated location at 1300 hours for an artillery barrage firing demonstration. Upon completion of the demonstration at about 1400 hours, the Brigade would reassemble in the trenches and continue training in regimental defense of a sector with live artillery being fired "over the troops in the trenches."<sup>14</sup> This method of training was very deliberate in its approach.

Gas training was included in the training of a regimental defense of a sector. Troops were subjected to real gas clouds. "Tubes containing this gas were hidden in the snow and at a specific time would be

suddenly opened to permit a wave of gas to blow down on the troops in the training trenches."<sup>15</sup> Realism was a vital ingredient in their training. Gas was released from the tubes for two or three second intervals and enough gas was released to cause discomfort but not incapacitate. The troops wore the English mask, and the demonstration lasted for a period of forty-five minutes. Safety precautions were observed, and the trenches were exhausted by a system of fans. Medical officers were in attendance to aid those that were overcome by inhaling a large dosage.<sup>16</sup> The training program called for realism as a necessary ingredient to learning.

As noted earlier, the conditions for General Sibert's relief from command had been attended to by General Pershing and his staff. General Pershing waited for the propitious moment. General Bullard was ordered to tour the front by General Pershing, so that he would not be in the division area while the plans for the relief were completed. General Sibert was a popular man in Washington and had earned a reputation as an excellent engineer. Inspectors from A.E.F. became more critical of the senior leadership of the 1st Division and they focused on his lack of experience as a commander of line units.<sup>17</sup> Sibert's style of leadership provided for subordinates discharging their functions with a minimum of guidance and supervision.<sup>18</sup> While this method of leadership promoted growth of subordinates, it was not calculated to convince the Commander-in-Chief and his staff that Sibert had a firm grip on the operations of the division. General Sibert's leadership style convinced General Pershing that he lacked initiative and an appreciation for the complexities for the employment of soldiers in combat.<sup>19</sup>

During and following the allied disasters of October and

November 1917, General Pershing was under increasing pressure to commit the 1st Division and he wanted the best leadership available in command.<sup>20</sup> Thus, Sibert was relieved of command on December 14, 1917, and replaced by General Bullard who impressed General Pershing as possessing the qualities necessary to lead the first division in combat.<sup>21</sup> Most of all, General Pershing found a commander who would do what General Pershing wanted and do it Pershing's way. The A.E.F. Commander left nothing to chance in deciding when to commit the 1st Division: all elements -- political, training readiness, and leadership -- would be in order before the first units of the first division of the A.E.F. would be risked in combat.

Training the division during this period met with difficulties. The weather turned for the worse; the roads and fields turned into quagmires; the men of the division suffered physically. Further, a shortage of forage caused by the movement of allies through the American training area on the way to Italy interfered with training. The animals used for transportation were reduced to near starvation. One maneuver was cancelled because draft animals were dying and thus causing a lack of tactical mobility.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, the 1st Division continued to train in a very methodical manner. The 1st Division was not deterred from achieving the goals imposed by Headquarters, A.E.F.

The fourth period of the A.E.F. program was a three week long training period set aside specifically for Brigade training, which began on December 16, and lasted until January 5, 1918.<sup>23</sup> The bulk of the training time was allocated to open warfare training, which was subdivided into an instruction phase and an application phase. Of the forty-eight hours allocated to this block for open warfare training, thirty



hours were set aside for the brigades to maneuver against each other. The division commander was responsible for developing a problem that would include those elements necessary for a combined arms operation. Each brigade was reinforced by a cavalry troop, artillery regiment, battalion engineers, a signal company, airplanes, and an ambulance company.<sup>24</sup> The maneuvers were to cover "the attack and defense, pursuit and retreat, and halt for night, billets and security."<sup>25</sup> This type of training for the first time showed promise of developing commanders and staffs on higher levels.

An open warfare maneuver scenario for both the First and Second Brigades was very general in nature. One brigade was reinforced with a regiment of artillery, a battalion of engineers, a signal detachment, an ambulance train, two airplanes, and a cavalry detachment for covering the right flank of an Army. This brigade was given the mission to move forward against a hostile force to determine its location, strength, and intentions while still covering the right rear of the main body. Meanwhile, the opposing brigade, similarly reinforced, was given the mission of creating a diversion by attacking the communications on the enemies' right rear flank. These maneuvers were free-play exercises monitored and regulated by appointed umpires.<sup>26</sup>

General Bullard did not allow much latitude for his subordinates to make mistakes. On his first day in command he set about rigidly enforcing the training principles and concepts provided by Headquarters, A.E.F. He did not hesitate to make a thinly veiled threat that if they did not accomplish their tasks they would be replaced; however, he passed responsibility for relief from duty to "G.H.Q." (General Headquarters), thereby making it appear that he was an instrument of General Pershing.



General Bullard was not a man to let his subordinates fail, even in the process of learning.<sup>27</sup> He proved himself capable of causing the division's leadership to acquire the cohesiveness needed for combat.

The fifth period (January 6-26, 1918) was primarily reserved for the 1st Division to train as a division. Division training dealt with, as in the regimental and brigade periods, open warfare and trench warfare training. Instruction for the division was to be devoted to:

<u>Open Warfare</u>	<u>Hours</u>	
A march forward	12	
Halt for the night, billets, and security	12	
Attack	12	
Defense, retreat	12	48
<u>French Warfare</u>		
Organization and occupation of a		
division sector	12	
Attack	18	30 <sup>28</sup>

The division was very meticulous in implementing the A.E.F. program.<sup>29</sup>

The first three days of the instruction (January 6, 7, and 8, 1918) were devoted to trench warfare training, which was carried out under the most extreme weather conditions.<sup>30</sup>

French (trench) warfare differed primarily from open warfare in the amount of knowledge available about an enemy and how plans were developed to deal with each situation. In open warfare a commander and his staff began with limited information and developed and executed plans to fit the situation as it was found to exist. On the other hand, plans for attacks in trench warfare were elaborately drawn and included all information known about enemy defenses. In trench warfare, problem

solving was reduced to employing standard formulas to reduce trench objectives. In open warfare, on the other hand, emphasis was placed on maneuvering forces and as the situation unfolded developing plans to the best advantage. This method taxed the imagination and capabilities of leaders, while trench warfare was a test of brute force. Open warfare required a better trained staff and commanders at all levels.

On January 11, 1918, any further training as directed by the A.E.F. program for the fifth period was suspended.<sup>31</sup> The maneuvers of units of the division under General Bullard convinced General Pershing that the 1st Division was trained for combat. Bullard had proven that he possessed the qualities that Pershing considered requisite to lead the first division of the A.E.F. in combat. The program was suspended because the 1st Division was scheduled to take over its own sector. and movement of the 1st Division was to begin on January 14, 1918. The formal training program for the 1st Division was ended.<sup>32</sup>

The 1st Division was assigned to the French XXXII Corps and moved into the corps area northwest of Toul.<sup>33</sup> General Pershing had fought hard to preserve American identity and to establish an American Army.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, the 1st Division was released for duty with a French Corps with the understanding that when three other American divisions were sufficiently trained, the four divisions would form an American Corps. Control of a sector by Americans would then become permanent.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the setbacks at Cambrai, and at Caporetto, and the collapse of Czarist Russia, General Pershing did not succumb to international political pressure by allowing American soldiers in American battalions or regiments to be drafted for the purpose of rounding out

French units.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, the key to the controversy was training. Had Pershing succumbed to international pressures and allowed American battalions to be integrated into French and British divisions, the American combat units could have participated in the war much sooner. When Pershing decided that Americans would only fight in larger American units, he was explicitly requiring more training for regimental and division staffs, and delaying American participation in the combat of World War I.

Further, General Pershing was continually criticized by the French for pursuing his own conception of preparation. The French insisted that pursuing open warfare doctrine would not win the war, while General Pershing maintained that it would. Fortunately for the Americans, the year 1918 saw the First World War evolve from a war in the trenches to a more mobile, open warfare. If it had not, and the Americans had hurled themselves fruitlessly on the barbed wire of the enemy, Pershing's name in future years might have been in the same reprobation as that of the French leader, Grardmaison, who had argued for open, mobile, offensive warfare in 1914.

By the beginning of the third training phase the Americans had become proficient in small unit tactics and in trench warfare. The American insistence on training for open warfare gradually influenced French thinking by January 1918. During that month the French "revised their instruction book to bring back the rifle to its rightful prestige. The difference in methods of training gradually lost first place in correspondence and official correspondence and official conversation."<sup>37</sup> The 1st Division was the vehicle through which American training concepts and tactical doctrine were promulgated. General Pershing had chosen the



1st Division to be the leader for implementation of A.E.F. training doctrine, and he chose an officer to command the division who would carry out his instructions.



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## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSIONS

The first American division fielded in Europe in 1917, was activated, organized, and introduced into France in one month. Even though the 1st Division was filled with fifty percent untrained recruits, it represented to Americans and Allies the first of many resources from America. As the first American division was entering France, the French Army was on the verge of collapsing from mutinies that stemmed from the Neville Offensive of April, 1917. At best, French military officials could depend on their units to maintain a defensive attitude, since French army morale was in a terrible state and was in need of bolstering. There was little hope of conducting a large scale offensive until the Americans arrived in sufficient numbers. Commitment of American soldiers to bolster French morale and conduct a large scale offensive was anxiously sought by the French. They wanted manpower to fill their depleted ranks; whether it was trained or not mattered little to the French at this point in the war. The 1st Division was the subject of some of these proposals.

On the other hand, many Americans such as General John J. Pershing thought the 1st Division carried with it the reputation of the whole American Army. The ability and reputation of the American officer corps was at stake. In insuring that the Americans were sufficiently trained prior to being committed to battle, General Pershing took great risks, but he would not be hurried into premature commitment.

The 1st Division was trained in three phases: basic individual



training, basic unit training, and advanced unit training. All three phases of training were conducted under an Allied command structure that provided for direct training supervision by the French, while command of the 1st Division was retained by General Pershing. The French supervision for training the 1st Division actually existed for the first phase of training and part of the second phase.

General Pershing's use of the 1st Division to establish precedents for the A.E.F. and gain concessions from the Allies for a budding American army did not allow such an arrangement to exist for long. If the American war effort was to gain recognition, two points were central to the 1st Division's training from the A.E.F. point of view: nascent American warfare doctrine had to be launched and Americans had to fight in American units. The training of the 1st Division was pursued along this pattern, and every attempt to integrate American battalions into Allied units was defeated.

The design of the first phase of the training program, Preliminary Training, was left to the discretion of the 1st Division commanding general, Major General William L. Sibert. General Sibert's training program was developed for a unit composed of over fifty percent untrained recruits. The subjects were chosen to ground the soldiers of the division in basic military subjects. Mastery of these subjects would allay the Allied and American fears that the division's soldiers were awkward, undisciplined, and untrained. This period was to form the foundation for more sophisticated training.

During the first phase, the French 47th Division provided a model for the 1st Division to follow. The training program envisioned the French demonstrating their techniques of trench warfare. French

warfare was pursued on a half day basis with the French while the other half of the training day was devoted to the 1st Division's training program.

General Pershing was unhappy with the 1st Division's training progress during this period. In addition, he wanted training to pursue his own doctrinal concepts of how to fight. Thus, he wanted the 1st Division to train in open warfare concepts rather than in French (trench) warfare. The 1st Division was in a difficult position. It was expected to accommodate itself to French methods and yet it was not doing enough to be distinctly American. Also, Headquarters A.E.F. had left the development of the division's training to the division commander. The 1st Division was further distracted by a constant stream of visitors and inspections; it is a wonder that any meaningful training was conducted under such conditions. But the 1st Division was trained, and it was trained in a very methodical manner.

Headquarters, A.E.F. centralized the 1st Division's training program in the second phase, which began in October 1917. Training proficiency had been found so deficient in the 1st Division that it became necessary to dictate a program of instruction. Actually, this period is marked by two important points. First, a minor concession was made to boost the sagging morale of the French by having the Americans make an appearance in the trenches. Second, the preeminence of American training supervision of the division was decided upon, despite the arrangement for French training supervision under the coalition structure.

The second phase began with a series of ten day tours for the battalions in the trenches under the command of a French division

commander. It was a training exercise in which the battalions were familiarized with French (trench) warfare methods under actual combat conditions. The end of this phase of training is important, since it marks American departure from training with French (trench) warfare doctrine and the emergence of American (open warfare) concepts of how to win the war. This was the last instance of the French providing the division with training supervision before it was certified as prepared to enter combat.

The third and final phase of training for the 1st Division was increasingly complex, and began on November 25, 1917. The A.E.F. program called for a series of maneuvers beginning at regimental level and progressing through brigade to division level. This period was to culminate in a division exercise that would certify the unit fit for combat.

Combined arms open warfare maneuvers were conducted at each level pitting regiment against regiment and brigade against brigade. These exercises were free play exercises monitored and controlled by umpires. The training principles employed in these maneuvers were modern in the sense that the purpose was to develop leadership at all levels. Commanders and staffs were taught to develop unknown situations and apply their resources as necessary to achieve a successful end; there was to be no standard solution that merely needed to be applied. It was in this manner that General Pershing sought to establish the identity of the American Expeditionary Force as an entity within the coalition.

Several principles emerged in training the 1st Division that may have potential for application today. First, the overall American commander must be vested with authority to make certain political decisions involving the employment of Americans with the military of other nations.



Whatever the circumstances, the parameters within which the overall American commander may operate must be carefully defined. A clearly established commander's operating framework provides for the immediate application of resource utilization. Pershing clearly had the authority to do as he saw fit. His guiding principle was to establish the American Army as an entity within the Allied coalition from the beginning in order to promote the recognition of America as one of the post war world powers. Pershing used American manpower, training, and tactical doctrine as the vehicle to achieve this end. Thus, from the very beginning of the American effort in France, the 1st Division was the spearhead used to establish American precepts. Pershing had to have almost unrestrained powers to deal effectively with Allies that considered themselves experts and the American newcomers to this war.

American doctrine as it evolved through the 1st Division emerged in a halting manner for such a powerful nation. The French experiences with the 1st Division must have been simultaneously maddening and frustrating. France was teetering on the brink of defeat while the American soldiers in the 1st Division were learning squad drill, first aid, and how to aim and fire their rifles. It is almost incred<sup>ible</sup>ulous to think that the first soldiers to reach France in World War I were not trained for contemporary combat; but, they were not.

The French were prepared for the Americans to come. Most of the details for the training of American soldiers of the 1st Division with the French were attended to prior to the American arrival. It is quite clear that the French were expecting a higher state of readiness than that actually possessed by the soldiers of the 1st Division. The fact that the French were conducting training at a high level of proficiency



while at the same time the Americans were at a low level is truly incongruous. This condition could only exist in a situation in which contemporary leadership did not exercise that element of the military responsible for planning, organizing, developing, and promulgating doctrine for such contingencies. The Americans of the 1st Division were out of touch with the times, but neither the Army nor the American society had anticipated the demands of World War I.

A great deal of luck for the Allies was involved in the outcome of the war during the 1st Division's early days in France. It is a measure of General Pershing's mettle that he had the courage to withhold the 1st Division's resources until they were trained. At times it must have appeared to the Allies that high stakes were riding on Pershing's insistence that the 1st Division would fight only after it was ready. However, from General Pershing's point of view, the reputation of the American officers corps was at stake. American officers had not been trained to lead anything larger than a regiment, and thus, the 1st Division would not be committed before it was trained. The withholding of the 1st Division's resources from the Allies was a tremendous gamble for General Pershing to take in the face of the risks that it involved. At the same time, early American commitment to her Allies would have probably been viewed as altruistic had the 1st Division been filled with trained soldiers and placed into combat.

The training program for the first American division in France began with the fundamentals of individual military training. Not only did the training begin with the most basic level, but the division floundered about in pursuit of its own ill-defined training goals. At the same time, there was too much disparity between the levels of the

American and French programs that the 1st Division was simultaneously pursuing. In a very real sense, it is impossible to follow two differing training programs. Members of the 1st Division should have been trained within one frame of reference, not two. In the case of the 1st Division, it would have been better to follow their own training program throughout the first period exclusively and to have trained under the French in the trenches at the beginning of the second period. The system of the first period vacillating between basic to more advanced daily was not progressive in approach. Had the training program of the first period been progressive, the 1st Division would have been trained for combat sooner than it was--perhaps six weeks sooner. As it was, the first Americans arrived in France on 23 June 1917 and entered combat on 21 October 1917.

The training programs of the second and third periods were better organized and more successful than that of the first phase. This improvement may be attributed to a functioning A.E.F. staff.

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